

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-16 (canceled)

17. (currently amended) A server for use in an ~~An~~ automated meter reading system, the automated meter reading system having comprising: a plurality of utility meters for measuring and recording metered data, a plurality of nodes, each node communicating with a number of designated meters to read the meter data, a plurality of gateways, each gateway communicating with a number of the nodes to receive the meter data, and a data network interfaced to communicate with the plurality of gateways, ~~and~~

wherein the ~~a host~~ server is interfaced with the data network to receive the meter data read from the gateways, ~~said host~~

wherein the server ~~maintaining a topology database that holds~~ stores ~~[[;]]~~ first electronic data representative of meter assignments to at least one node ~~[[;]]~~ and second electronic data electronically keyed to said first electronic data and representative of node assignments to at least one gateway ~~[[;]]~~,

and wherein the server ~~third electronic data electronically keyed to the second electronic data for grouping groups~~ together a plurality of nodes to define groups of noninterfering nodes based at least in part on the node assignments ~~[[;]]~~ and ~~fourth electronic data electronically keyed to the second electronic data for grouping groups~~ together a plurality of gateways to define sets of noninterfering gateways.

18. (currently amended). The ~~system~~ server of claim 17, wherein said ~~host~~ server stores information related to the topology of gateways, nodes, meters, and their respective interconnections and/or interfaces in a topology database.

19. (currently amended) The ~~system~~ server of claim 18, wherein said topology database is initially populated generated based on a geographic location of every meter, node, and gateway in the system.

20. (currently amended) The ~~system~~ server of claim 18, wherein cells are defined, each of said cells defining a plurality of meters that each communicate with a particular node.

21. (currently amended) The ~~system~~ server of claim 20, wherein said ~~host~~ server determines which nodes communicate with which gateways in accordance with said cells.

22. (currently amended) The ~~system~~ server of claim 17, wherein noninterfering meters, nodes and gateways are defined in said topology database by like identifiers, and wherein said host server addresses noninterfering ones of said meters, nodes and gateways by sending a command containing said like identifiers.